

peace and have fully cooperated at every turn with OSCE representatives. They have taken risks for peace despite a decade-long blockade of their countries and frequent acts of Azerbaijani aggression.

I strongly urge President Ailyev, if he is serious about peace, to come back to the negotiating table, cease all calls for military action, and end the oppressive blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

PRE-AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD TRADE NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, as the United States grapples with an historically large trade deficit, and many of our farmers and manufacturers face growing and cumulative competitive disadvantages in the international marketplace, the time has come for Congress to work with the administration on behalf of a stronger trade policy.

Clearly, the centerpiece of a new and more aggressive trade policy has to be new authority which allows our government to pursue trade agreements that level the international playing field for American workers and American products. Congress must act quickly and firmly to give our trade negotiators the authority they need to defend our interest and open distant markets to the creation of our sweat, ingenuity and freedom.

Last week, I outlined to the House the major provisions of my bill, H.R. 1446, the Standard Trade Negotiating Authority Act. At that time, I promised this House I would return and discuss at greater detail the major components of this bill.

Today, I would like to focus on the pre-authorization requirements. This section requires the President to consult with Congress and receive an affirmative vote to authorize the initiation of trade negotiations with any country or countries before proceeding with them. WTO negotiations, which are already authorized by existing agreements, would be exempt from this pre-authorization requirement.

Mr. Speaker, Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution specifically grants to Congress the authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations. Unfortunately, over the last several decades, Congress has almost entirely ceded the policy making initiative over this increasingly vital part of our national economy. Under Fast Track, we eliminated our oversight and opportunity to influence the outcome of potentially far-reaching agreements to one single up-or-down vote.

I believe this lack of input and transparency has led directly to the increasing controversy surrounding trade

agreements and the inability of the Nation to have an intelligent and conclusive discussion about trade policy.

For example, NAFTA was never contemplated during the Fast Track authorization then in existence. In 1988, when we last authorized Fast Track authority, NAFTA was not even discussed. But within a couple of years, NAFTA was brought back in toto for an up-or-down vote.

Likewise, the 1994 GATT agreement included changes to section 201 and 301 of our trade laws, the antisurge and antidumping provisions, without any prior discussion in Congress.

How then would the pre-authorization requirements of H.R. 1446 address these concerns?

First, Mr. Speaker, my bill provides ongoing authority for the President to negotiate any trade agreement, providing first that he receives approval from Congress in the form of a vote to specifically authorize that negotiation along with its scope and its objectives.

This means that each negotiation can be considered under its own merits and provides for a systemic review by the Congress while there is still some time to affect the outcome.

There will be no more surprises, not for us, and more importantly not for the people we represent.

Under this legislation, 90 days before entering into trade negotiations, the President would formally notify Congress of his intention to proceed. The International Trade Commission would also be required to complete an assessment of the potential impact of the agreement on the U.S. economy.

Legitimate labor and environmental concerns would find voice in this process through the establishment of a Commission on Labor and the Environment. The Commission would issue a report to Congress and the President laying out specific concerns and negotiating objectives prior to the vote by Congress on pre-authorization.

This careful review process allows the Congress to deal with the reality that not all proposed negotiations are created equal.

It is certainly the case that a bilateral trade agreement with Australia would raise very different issues and different concerns than one with Egypt or Laos.

Hemispheric trade proposals may raise labor and environmental concerns which have no relevant place in a negotiation involving financial services or competition policy.

For these reasons, our negotiating strategy and goals must be flexible if we are to maximize the opportunities before us. The law should recognize this reality while still remaining true to our constitutional obligations as a Congress.

Some may attack this proposal because it would require two votes by Congress, not just one, one before a negotiation and one to approve the final agreement. I say so much the better.

The government should speak plainly and honestly to our citizens. Our trade

policy should be shaped in direct consultation with working families throughout the United States, speaking through their elected representatives.

Goals and objectives should be spelled out. Details matter. If we want to restore the faith of Americans in trade agreements, we must be forthright in spelling out our objectives, and we should have nothing to hide.

Pass this legislation and give the administration the authority they need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HORN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TROUBLE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the House's attention today to the events that are unfolding in the Philippines, an area that is only 3 hours by flying time to my home island of Guam.

I am troubled by the recent events unraveling in the Philippines in regards to the allegations that the Abu Sayyef, a band of separatists from the southern Philippines, have kidnapped and have killed an American, this is still unconfirmed, and are holding some 20 more people, including two other Americans, as hostages.

I happened to be in Manila on an official visit over the Memorial Day recess when this tragedy occurred. As the lead official from the U.S. at the time in the Philippines, I participated in a number of meetings which were designed to try to help deal with the crisis as well as many other issues that were affecting Philippine-U.S. relations.

Today, I would certainly urge each and every American to continue to support President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in her heroic and courageous efforts during this very tense standoff. She has made it clear up till now that